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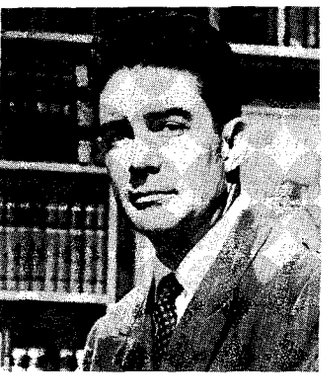

DAN SMOOT

ELECTORAL COLLEGE -- PART I

It is doubtful that a President of the United States has been legally elected during the past 134 years. It is historical fact that, of the 36 men who have been President, 14 (more than one-third) were minority Presidents — that is, they were not supported by a majority of the people who thought they were voting for a President.

The Constitution gives each state as many electoral votes for President and Vice President as it has Senators and Representatives in the U. S. Congress. Each state, regardless of size, has 2 Senators. A state's representation in the House is determined by the size of its population. The least populous states have 1 Representative each. The most populous state has 41 Representatives. In all, the 50 states have 100 Senators and 435 Representatives in Congress. Hence, they have 535 electoral votes for President and Vice President. The 23rd Amendment (adopted in 1961) gives the District of Columbia 3 electoral votes — making the total electoral votes 538. To win an election, a presidential candidate must receive a majority (270) of electoral votes.

The Constitution requires state legislatures to appoint presidential electors. The first seven Presidents were elected in compliance with this requirement (George Washington, twice; John Adams, once; Thomas Jefferson, twice; James Madison, twice; James Monroe, twice; John Quincy Adams, once; and Andrew Jackson, for his first term).

By the time Andrew Jackson ran for his second term (1832), political parties had become so strong, and partisan feeling so bitter, that political parties, which controlled state legislators, began usurping the legislators' duty to appoint presidential electors.

As the system now works, political parties, in national nominating conventions, choose presidential and vice presidential candidates. In state conventions (or in meetings of state central committees), the parties choose electors pledged to vote for the party candidates. Only 3 times since

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the party system developed has a presidential elector voted for the presidential candidate of *his* choice, rather than for his party's candidate. This happened in 1948, 1956, and 1960.

In some states, candidates *and* electors are listed on ballots. Most states, however, have too many electors to list; so, just the names of presidential and vice presidential candidates are on ballots.

In November, every leap year, voters go to the polls, most thinking they are voting for presidential and vice presidential candidates; but they are not. They cannot. Voters vote only for presidential electors, whose names are often not even on the ballot. Hence "presidential election day" is not the day when a President is elected. It is a day when presidential electors are elected. The presidential candidate whose electors get a plurality (highest number)of popular votes cast in a state on "presidential election day" will later get all of that state's electoral votes.

Later is mid-December, when elected electors meet in their respective states and cast their votes for their party's candidates. Early in January, the electoral votes from all 50 states and the District of Columbia are opened and counted at a joint session of Congress. This constitutes the official election of the President and Vice President.

Under this system, it is possible for a candidate to be elected President, even though his electors received only a small percentage of the total popular vote.

Using statistics from 1964 (rounded out for simplicity), let us see what *could* happen. In 1964, 70 million votes for presidential electors were cast. Of these, 27 million were cast in 39 states; 43 million were cast in the 11 most populous states and in the District of Columbia — which, together, have 271 electoral votes, enough to elect a President.

Imagine a future election when the 43 million votes of the 11 most populous states and the District are split: 20,425,000 for Candidate A's electors; 20,210,000 for Candidate B's electors; 2,365,000 for all others. In all other states, Candidate B's electors get all votes. This means that Candidate A's electors get a total of 20,425,000 votes; Candidate B's electors get a total of 47,210,000 votes. Yet, Candidate A is elected, because his electors got slim pluralities in enough big states to give him a majority of electoral votes.

A distortion of *that proportion* has never occurred; but distortions of *that kind* occur frequently.

Consider the most recent election of a "minority President." In 1960, Kennedy's electors received 34,227,096 votes; Nixon's electors, 34,108,546; others' electors, 461,822. Thus 343,272 fewer voters voted for Kennedy's electors than for his opponents' electors; but Kennedy received 303 of the 537 electoral votes that year, because his electors received pluralities in key states.

Minority Presidents are not necessarily bad. The evil of our present method is that it converts presidential elections into huckstering contests, in which political parties barter the interests of their country for controlled voting blocs that can give them pluralities in key states.

Consider some examples. In 1944, when Roosevelt ran for a fourth term, the contest between him and Dewey was close. Managers of both political parties anticipated that the outcome would be decided by the electoral votes of four populous states: Illinois, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania. Public sentiment in those 4 states was as evenly divided as in the other 44. Hence, both parties concentrated on strong special-interest groups in the four key states.

In 1944, Jews constituted the most significant special-interest group in New York. At that time, Palestine was a mandated territory controlled by the British. The zionist movement (centered largely in New York City where there were more than 2 million Jews) was strong. Zionists wanted Palestine opened for unrestricted Jewish immigration, so that Jews from all over the world could

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go there and form their own nation. Enormous dangers were involved, because a Jewish nation in Palestine must necessarily be carved out of the heartland of the Mohammedan world. Mohammedans and Jews burn with ancient animosities.

Bidding for zionist-influenced Jewish votes in New York City, both political parties in 1944 put "Palestine resolutions" in their platforms, promising to use the power and prestige of the United States in support of the zionist movement. The result was that the 79th Congress passed a resolution calling upon Great Britain to open Palestine for unrestricted Jewish immigration. Soon thereafter, the British dumped on us the responsibility of protecting Palestine. Israel was born. Support of this socialist nation has cost American taxpayers more than a billion dollars. Support of Arab refugees from Israel has also cost us millions; and Palestine remains a loaded bomb.

Whether the zionist cause be considered good or bad, the fact is that, in 1944, when we were in the third year of the most terrible war in history, Republican and Democrat parties gambled the security and welfare of our nation, planting seeds of future wars by meddling in the affairs of foreign nations — for the purpose of getting Jewish votes in New York City.

Labor unions and Negroes constituted two other powerful special-interest groups which controlled significant blocs of votes in the key states of Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania in 1944. Both Republicans and Democrats catered to the unions and both put "FEPC planks" in their platforms — that is, promises to use (unconstitutionally, of course) the power of the federal government to force the hiring of Negroes, without regard to merit.

As it turned out, Roosevelt's electors carried Illinois, Michigan, and Pennsylvania with small pluralities: 105 thousand, 140 thousand, and 22 thousand respectively. Dewey's electors carried New York by 500 thousand. Nationally, Roosevelt's electors won a popular plurality in 1944 that was about the same size as Roosevelt's federal payroll. Roosevelt's plurality in 1944 was 3,596,227; persons on the federal payroll, 3,465,420.

In the 1948 contest between Truman and Dewey, also close, both parties again tried to placate the general public with sops and broad promises of something for everybody, while pinpointing their appeal for special-interest votes in key cities of key states. Their principal appeal was to the Negro vote in large northern cities. It had become apparent that a few thousand Negro votes in one city of an evenly-divided state with a large electoral vote could determine the outcome of a presidential election. In 1948, the Democrats' appeal to the Negro vote was more effective than that of the Republicans; and Truman won, though he received a minority of the popular vote.

Many people thought we had stopped the bartering of our national interest for political gain when Eisenhower was elected in 1952, but the situation grew worse. The race problem became a major American tragedy when the Democrat Party, under Roosevelt and Truman, adopted, for political reasons, the communist program of racial agitation. The problem became a national disaster — transforming peaceful communities into caldrons of violence — when the Republican Party, under Eisenhower and Nixon, launched a political struggle to win organized Negro support away from the Democrats.

Effects of political parties' bidding for bloc votes from minority groups, present in all elections, are most noticeable in close presidential contests. Consider, again, the 1960 election.

In the State of New York, Republican electors received 22,510 *more votes* than Democrat electors — from a total of 7,276,504 votes cast. Yet, the Democrat candidate (Kennedy) received all of New York's electoral votes. Why? The Liberal Party polled 406,176 votes — 70% of them (288,109) in Harlem and other sections of New York City with high concentrations of minority groups. The Liberal Party and the Democrat Party ran the same slate of electors. Hence, votes for the

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Liberal Party were counted for the Democrats, giving the Democrats a statewide plurality of 383,666 votes.

In the State of Illinois, outside of Cook County (Chicago), Republican electors in 1960 received 310,000 *more votes* than Democrat electors; but in Cook County (which contains big minority-group voting blocs, notably the Negro vote in South Chicago), Democrat electors got a plurality of 320,000 votes — thus giving them a statewide plurality of 10,000 votes over Republicans, delivering all of Illinois' electoral votes to Kennedy.

If the electoral votes of New York and Illinois had gone to Nixon, he would have been President instead of Kennedy.

This review is not intended to imply an invidious comparison between Nixon and Kennedy. They offered identical socialist programs. The record of their 1960 political contest is instructive, however. For one thing, it clearly shows that millions who thought they voted for President had practically nothing to do with choosing a President. The candidates were chosen by political party conventions which represent, not the public, but active party workers — a minute fraction of the public. The fact that the election — in which more than 68 million people voted — was decided by a half million votes cast *en bloc* in the slum sections of Chicago and New York City, is a portent of much worse to come.

Racial violence and rising crime rates — caused, to considerable degree, by political pandering for Negro votes — are among the reasons why industrious, law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are fleeing to suburbs, their places in inner cities being taken by persons dependent on welfare, public housing, rent subsidies, and every other form of assistance except self-assistance. These are the people who vote *en bloc* for the political party they think likely to give them the biggest handouts from the public treasury — for the politicians who most effectively ingratiate themselves on rabblerousers and agitators in control of the bloc votes. These people are susceptible to coercion, intimidation, deception, easy promises. And their voting strength is growing fast in big cities of states with the largest electoral votes.

When the people of ancient Rome — bemused by free circuses and full of food which the Emperors confiscated from productive citizens for distribution to the Roman mobs — became so numerous that they consumed the substance of the country and intimidated the Roman legions, the Roman Empire degenerated into rule by ruthless dictators who were creatures of idle big-city mobs. America is fast sinking into this kind of condition. One reason is our corrupt method of electing Presidents.

NEXT: This series on Electoral College Reform is in three parts. Next week, I will review the reforms most widely supported. The following week, I will discuss the electoral system created by the Constitution — the best of all possible systems — and show how it could be reestablished by state legislatures.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTION

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